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GUEST EDITORIAL

Without Hunters, Who'd Pick Up The Tab?

It's felt by antihunters that the nation could do without hunters and their hunting license money and special taxes and that wildlife conservation could be supported with appropriations from general funds.

However, a close look at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed wildlife budget for fiscal year 1976 reveals what can happen when wildlife management is left to non-hunting interests and paid for out of general funds.

At a quick glance, the Fish and Wildlife Service's $234-million budget proposal for FY 1976 seems quite sizable. One reason is the $92.5-million that comes directly from sportsmen in excise taxes paid on arms and ammunition, fishing tackle and sales of federal Duck Stamps. Another $22-million comes from payments by other agencies to mitigate fish and wildlife losses, and from modest payments out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

But only about half of the Fish and Wildlife Service's total budget, some $119.5-million, would come from general funds to be requested by the Administration for F & WS programs. Now, break this down in terms of wildlife alone.

A total of only $69.9-million may be allocated to wildlife from the federal general fund in FY 1976 - and of that, $17.1-million would be spent just trying to minimize fish and wildlife losses resulting from energy and water developments (most of which are financed by other federal agencies). Result: A total of about $52.8-million in general fund monies to be spent for wildlife enhancement - for actual efforts to increase wildlife numbers.

By comparison, the nation's hunters poured a grand total of $185-million into wildlife conservation in 1973 - $124-million in state hunting licenses, another $49-million in excise taxes on guns and ammunition and about $12-million in Duck Stamp revenue. Not a dime of this was appropriated from any general revenue; it came from the hunter's pocket.

Wildlife doesn't have many supporters at the federal level - a political reflection of the unconcern of the 200-million non-hunters. Of the 17 major items in the federal budget for FY 1976, resources rank dead last. And compare that pathetic $52.8-million in federal funds appropriated for wildlife with the $57-million requested by the Bureau of Reclamation to continue its Missouri River Basin programs that include such wildlife horrors as the Mid-State Project in Nebraska and the Garrison and Oahe projects in the Dakotas. The 1976 national budget also includes a $56-million item by the Corps of Army Engineers for its Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Alabama and Mississippi. Either of these examples involves more general funds than will be spent for all federal wildlife enhancement during FY 1976.

So much for the non-hunting public's concern for wildlife - and for anti-hunter proposals to do away with hunting and pay for American wildlife conservation with general funds.

The non-hunting public may "like" wildlife, but apparently not enough to really finance its conservation.

JOHN MADSON
Winchester-Western

Reprinted from *Michigan Out-of-Doors*

LETTERS

Pointer, Setter, ... Dropper?

PLEASE set me straight on what a "dropper" is. The average person calls a cross between a setter and a pointer a "dropper." I thought that when a cross with pointer characteristics was bred to a pointer, the puppy from this mating showing setter characteristics was a "dropper."

E. L. Dupuy
Martinsville

Our resident expert says a "dropper" is the offspring from a pointer-setter cross and can resemble either parent in actions and in color, although they are quite often solid black. — Ed.

Geese Piece Popular

YOUR May 1975 issue was one of the best. It had something for practically everyone - for the hunter, non-hunter, fisherman, boater, as well as other subjects of interest. Too many wildlife organizations are going to magazines more adapted for a park-like situation rather than wildlife oriented.

I was especially interested in the article on home-grown geese by Caroline Bokinsky. I can sympathize with the problems encountered since here in Land Between the Lakes we had a similar project and met with many of the same problems, and also finally ended up with a floating nesting device with which we are having considerable success. We did find that the box should be set back about 8 inches to make it float more evenly, and we had to cover the styrofoam with hardware cloth to prevent destruction by muskrats.

Paul W. Sturm, Superv. Wildlife Mgt.
TVA, Golden Pond, Kentucky

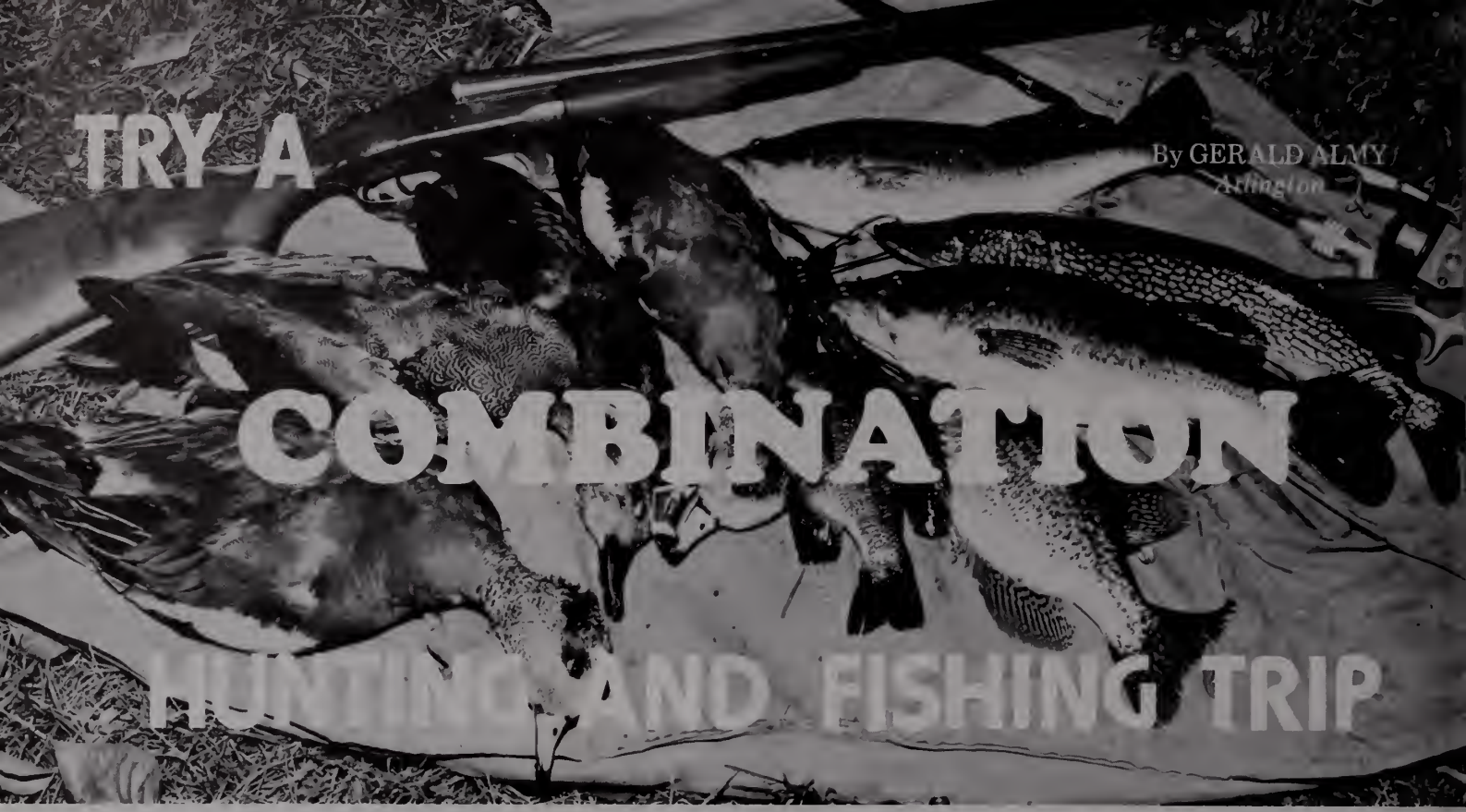
Jan.-Dec. Fishing License?

WHY not an all-year (January-December) fishing license? The first month of summer is sure no time for our fishing license to expire. What do my fellow fishermen think about this?

Ashby H. Clark
Gladys

Our licenses expire June 30 each year for very practical accounting reasons, not to entrap unwary anglers. It would take an act of the General Assembly to change this and some careful study of its effects on our revenue flow would be in order first. The procedure is to buy your license each year on or about July 1; then it is good for a full 12 months. The problem seems to be that there are many "springtime" anglers that start thinking about freshwater fishing in April and forget about it in June. Probably if the license they bought in April was good for the rest of the year, they would not use it after July anyway.

I keep a valid fishing license in my pocket all year so it makes little difference when I buy it, but I will have to admit that July 1 is one of the more inconvenient times. I'll be interested to see what you hear from your fellow fishermen. —Ed.



TRY A COMBINATION HUNTING AND FISHING TRIP

By GERALD ALMY
Arlington

HEAVEN must have hunting and fishing like this," Randy Ornsbee said as we cruised down Route 66 in the evening twilight. "If our luck's as good as it was today, you won't find me complaining one bit," I answered.

"I can't understand why more outdoorsmen don't combine their hunting and fishing trips in the fall. I haven't had this much fun in a long time." I couldn't agree more. Most fishermen I know are hunters, and most hunters are avid fishermen. Yet, for some reason, few combine these sports. This is regrettable, for fall offers the very best fishing of the season, and the early days of the hunting season see the most game jumped and birds flushed. What could make more sense than to combine the two?

Some may argue that spring fishing is better, but you'd be hard pressed to prove that by my experiences. The biggest and most game fish I've taken have come from cooling autumn waters.

Trout, responding to the lower water temperatures and rising stream levels are eager to grab flies and lures tossed near their lies. Bass have invaded the shallow waters near shore in search of minnows, frogs and other foods which they seem to sense will be in short supply soon. Often largemouths will gorge themselves all day long in October and November in an effort to build up layers of fat to tide them over lean winter months. Pan fish also feed heavily during autumn months. And perhaps the greatest game fish of them all, the river smallmouth, splinters plugs and deer hair flies savagely when his crystal green rivers are bordered with the russet, orange and scarlet hues of autumn foliage and river bottoms turn dark from decomposing fallen leaves.

Couple fast-paced fishing with the challenge of the hunt after long months of closed seasons, pick an exquisite fall day when sultry summer heat waves are a thing of the past, humidity is low, spring winds and rains are vanished, the sun shines bright and trees are a mottled collage of color - I ask you, what is this but a sportsman's paradise?

Randy Ornsbee and I were on our way home from just such an unforgettable combination hunting-fishing trip that day on the fabled Shenandoah River. Before daylight we unloaded my car-top boat at a pre-planned put-in point after leaving his truck five miles downstream as a return vehicle.

A veil of white mist was lifting from the low gin-clear autumn water, as if the river were removing its night shroud of fog to greet the bright new morning. Few trees had yet begun their annual leaf-painting ritual, but the abundance of green foliage made the few oranges and yellows that were present stand out that much more spectacularly.

We kept the equipment in the 12-foot johnboat to a minimum, both for maneuverability and to lighten the load so we would hit fewer rocks when negotiating the frequent shallow limestone ledges and protruding rocks. Two light spinning rods, two tackle boxes, two shotguns, ammunition, a lunch, and paddle was all our gear.

From the moment we left the roar of the highway and began drifting sedately down the placid water, leav-

ing behind all the everyday chores, trials, headaches, and concerns that seem so insignificant here on the free-flowing river, away from the drone of trucks, the blare of the TV set, we knew the day would be a success. No matter what our bag in terms of squirrels and bass, the peaceful solitude and soothing therapeutic values of the float trip would be rewards enough.

Little did we have to worry about a small bag. Barely 100 yradsards from our launching point we were greeted with evidence of our quarry. A bass of about two pounds rose in the first gentle riffle we crossed, inhaling a hovering damsel fly.

Squirrels were everywhere. We didn't see them all. Some we just heard cutting nuts in the morning sun, others rustling in fallen leaves on the forest floor in search of hickory nuts and acorns, others scolding bothersome companions. And some we saw - playing tag in the heavily leafed-out branches, scurrying down to the river's edge for a drink, chewing noisily, perched on a visible limb.

It would be easy to kill a limit apiece this morning. but we were content to bag two bushytails each, providing the main ingredient for a delicious Southern Squirrel Stew for each of our families. After shooting the squirrels we hunted for a while without guns, just watching the wildlife, which included several flocks of wood ducks and mallards which we spooked up below riffles, and a doe that perked up and stared inquisitively at the strangers invading her forest.

Soon the lure of river bass had us rigging up our outfits, though, in hopes of cooperative smallmouths to round out the day. We weren't let down on this front either. Bass came willingly to my top-water crippled minnow, twitched slow and enticingly next to shoreline cover. Randy scored well with a green flatfish worked lazily across stream in the crystalline, leaf-strewn eddies.

A fine stringer like this makes any trip worthwhile

Randy Ornsby about to bring a bass to creel.

None of the bass were trophy fish this outing, but several topped the minimum size limit of 12 inches and one tiger-bared beauty that nailed my tiny plug next to a sodden, storm-uprooted oak tree edged the 16-inch mark. We returned all our bass this trip to delight other anglers, or perhaps ourselves, on another day.

Experienced squirrel hunters know that where you find water you'll often discover heavy concentrations of bushytails. Hence combination squirrel hunting-fishing trips are a natural pair of occupations - be it on a small trout stream or a brawling bass river. Other forms of hunting may not necessarily be done right at the fishing hole, but angling spots will seldom be far off from the hunter's destination. Be it a farm pond, river, creek or reservoir - some fishing is usually close at hand, begging to fill in the unproductive hunting hours of the day.

Two forms of hunting that readily come to mind for most outdoor sportsmen as likely partners for one half of a combination gunning-angling trip are doves and squirrels, since their seasons are open during September and October - prime fishing time. But sea ducks are also open during October and provide a fine combination for a day on the Chesapeake Bay battling blues and stripers in the afternoon after gunning for eider, old-squaw and scoter in the early hours of morning.

More and more anglers are extending their fishing season year round, taking advantage of the relatively

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Symposium On Channelization:

A Report

By DEANE DOZIER
Waynesboro

A STRANGE phenomenon occured in Harrisonburg in mid-August. A match came within a frog's eyelash of a powder keg . . . and there was no explosion. The volatile combination was made up of representatives of government agencies that channelize streams and the conservationsists, biologists, fishermen and others who oppose their work. Impetus for the three-day Symposium on Stream Channel Modification grew from a tour the Richmond office of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service arranged last year to demonstrate the effectiveness of their channelization projects. The tour included the counties of Amherst and Nelson where extensive channelization had been done following the devastating floods of 1969 and 1972. Most of the projects shown had, indeed, been necessary.

Opponents of channelization on the tour, including the very vocal Trout Unlimited group, had to agree. Where entire roads had been washed out and the stream channel relocated where the road once had been, repair work was called for. Where massive piles of debris blocked the stream channel, clearing was in order. But, insisted some on the tour, there were omissions. The news media and the public were seeing only half the picture. At one point, Joe Purdue of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation stopped the bus driver as the tour bus passed his own property and took the microphone. Joe pointed to a channelized section on his property and asked why similar sites were not being shown. Large, living sycamores and maples from both sides of the stream had been uprooted, piled in a stack, and burned for no apparent reason, said Joe. No homes or highways were threatened by the stream, he said, but the channelization was done anyway, leaving an ecologically dead stretch of water with no fish.

G. D. "Jerry" Schuder, Sr., president of the Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited, passed out a notice to all on the tour that his organization would plan a counter-tour to show the miles of streams TU felt had been channelized unnecessarily. "We saw excessive work on that tour that had been done miles upstream from any bridges or highways," said Jerry. "The unnecessary work at least equalled the necessary work."

Jerry and Raymond V. Corning, fish management coordinator with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, began planning the counter-tour. Other groups joined forces. The Sport Fishing Institute, the Virginia Wildlife Federation and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation came on board. The Sierra Club, the Virginia B.A.S.S. State Federation, and the Float Fishermen of Virginia became sponsors, along with the Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League and the National Capitol Casting Club. Cooperating with these sponsors were the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Game Commission.

Plans grew to include discussion, a chance for both sides to speak their minds. Scientists who were conducting studies on the effects of stream channelization were invited. Planners of the event hoped for 100 people from Virginia and from about five or six neighboring states. What they got was some 250 persons, from 20 states. Some came to Harrisonburg's Belle Meade Restaurant from as far away as Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and South Dakota. There were trout and bass fishermen, outdoorsmen, students involved in research projects, professors and representatives of every type of outdoor and conservation organization.

It was a brave trio from the SCS, the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who came to present their policies and objectives to a standing-room-only crowd in the banquet hall.

Carl Thomas, chief biologist of the SCS in Washington, D.C., told the audience, "It will take a combination of engineering and ecological talent to reconcile the . . . ways different segments of society see streams - as a source of water, a source of fear from flooding, or a source of relaxation." He explained the methods the

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The river rock used to protect this stream bank is unstable and will be washed away with the next flood, requiring more expensive repairs.

DUMB MISTAKES I HAVE MADE

By BILL TREADWELL
Daleville

LIFE is full of pleasant, as well as some unpleasant, experiences . . . the expected and the unexpected. Usually it's the latter we'd rather forget. There's a wall plaque in my office which reads: "So far today I made one mistake . . . I got out of bed." Not only have these words applied to certain days at work, but to some of my hunting efforts as well.

Primarily a bird hunter, I favor hunting what I consider the "big four" - dove, bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse, and wild turkey. These fine game birds are found throughout Virginia, though the latter two seem to flourish best west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Whatever your preference in game, the enjoyment of trying to outwit your opponent to put meat on the table is never forgotten. While safe hunting methods should always be taken seriously, the sport does offer some lighter moments in the end.

Upon joining my hunting party in a cornfield one warm September day, I introduced them to a friend I brought along for his first dove shoot. Considering myself no longer a novice on doves (attaining an average of six birds per box of shells) I gave my friend final instructions on the "rules": Know where the other hunters are located; don't shoot toward the barn; lead your bird according to distance; and always follow through. Sounded simple enough. I positioned my friend in a spot I was sure birds would pass over; and it was a reasonably "safe" place to learn the art of wing shooting - for him and us.

The shoot started slowly; heat and gnats moved us around more than the doves. Then late in the afternoon, as feeding time approached, the blue sky became full of darting brown targets. Guns roared for over an hour. Occasionally I glanced my friend's direction to note any visible progress, but a quick-flying dove would soon distract my observations.

At the end of the day we gathered back at the cars to count our success and brag about that lucky double. My friend strolled up with a grin on his face as he held a somewhat "loaded" game vest.

"Heard a lot of shootin' in your corner; how'd ya do?" I asked.

"Got my limit," was his reply as he proceeded to dump his birds on the ground next to ours.

"Blackbirds," an elder hunter shouted laughingly.

How dumb of me! I had told my friend everything he needed to know about shooting doves *except* what a dove looked like.

It wasn't long after the previous incident that several in that same party wasted hours in a cut cornfield which attracted only a few single doves. We decided to pack up our gear and drive to a near-by watering hole in hope of catching late feeders on their way to roost. We piled into one car and headed down a dusty farm road for our last chance of the day. As we sighted birds perched along a telephone wire a few hundred yards from our destination, I was elected to get out and "walk 'em up" after the others got situated near the pond. In haste I got my gun and shells from the car trunk and loaded up as they drove off leaving me in a trail of dust.

Giving the others time to select their stand, I slowly moved in their direction. Birds scattered simultaneously off the wire away from my oncoming approach. I managed to drop a couple of birds who got confused in their descent. I saw birds flying all around my buddies, but the only shots I heard were coming from my automatic.

"Why aren't you guys shooting?" I hollered as I neared them.

As they stood around the car looking upward at the sky, in an angry tone they yelled back, "You locked the keys in the trunk." Another dumb move. Needless to say, I never pulled the trigger again that day. I had to share my gun with some unhappy friends on a few departing birds.

Which brings to mind another case of a tumultous departure. After an unsuccessful five-hour grouse hunt in the snow-capped mountains of Roanoke County, I decided to put my wet, chilled body in the car and head home. As I drove out an old logging road, I spotted three grouse strutting across my path not 50 yards away. I applied the brakes with some quick foot action and rested the vehicle at the point where birds entered cover. I eased out the door, grapped my over-and-under and fumbled in my coat for a shell. I'd have time for only one shot. Excitedly I slipped the shell into the top cylinder. My expectations were true. Whrrrr! Up they came, twisting around trees in every direction.

"Click!"

"What happened?" I stared at my gun in amazement.

Well, I'd done it again. These were the only birds I'd jumped all day, and I'd put the shell in the wrong barrel. "Somebody Upstairs figures I'm not living right," I thought as I dejectedly climbed back into the car.

Many a bird has escaped to live another day because of problems with my "dumb" guns. Like the time I jumped two grouse while hunting with the over-and-under. After missing them both, I swore to return the next day with my automatic. Twenty-four hours later I was back. And the grouse got away again! In switching guns I forgot where the "safety" was located.

I've also learned my lesson about not picking up spent shells *before* retrieving my kill. During a quail hunt in a grassy field, I unloaded two No. 8's on a wide single. Marking the spot where the bird fell, I bent over to sift the grass for the two hulls. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Finding one, I abandoned the search for the second and hustled over to fetch my bird. You guessed it. In that short span of a few seconds the bird had regained his senses and run about ten yards. Not thinking he might be alive, I failed to reload my gun. As he took off, I stood there, mouth open, holding the one empty hull.

Then there are always those "little things" that upset a normal day; for instance, getting four separate shots at a spring gobbler that is probably still flying at 60 mph to this day. Or accidentally spitting tobacco juice on my brand new Winchester. Not funny was getting slapped three times in the eye by pine tree bristles while charging through the woods. Or having a grouse thunder out from under my "position" at the inopportune moment of answering Mother Nature's call. Or camouflaging one of my best friends in a thick hedgerow I had

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MY MOUNTAIN

By BILL ANDERSON
Haysi

IT was my mountain. It had been for all eternity. At least since I could remember. From the time I first saw it, I loved that mountain. From age six or so I romped over the mountain. Later I came to my mountain to meditate - or to pray. Sometimes I hunted on my mountain, a lame excuse just to be there.

Sometimes I stood on my mountain and watched with awe as the sun rose in the splendor that only God can create. Other times I stood silently, reverently, and watched the sun sink below the tall forest trees, felt the purple twilight steal away the last tinge of daylight, almost unnoticed. Then I slipped my feet down the hillside and hurried homeward.

It was my mountain and I thought it would remain mine forever, beautiful, unchanged - with lovely green foilage unfurled to the summer sun; stark, naked trees pointing toward a menacingly lead gray sky at other times; its of mountain laurel always green.

But nothing remains the same forever. The poor own little, and I held no man-made deed for my mountain, although one from a much higher authority was etched in my heart. So the inevitable came. The rumble of the mighty bulldozer, wiping away everything in its path, robbing my mountain of its beauty and quiet loneliness. They were killing my mountain while I died inside.

The men stood gloating and delighting in what they had done to my mountain. How they would profit from defiling the splendor that had stood so long and would never be again.

I looked at my mountain with remorse, with hurt. I hated not the men, for they were ignorant in what they did. Their lust for material wealth had blinded them to the mountain's scenic beauty. They saw not what I had seen on my mountain. They were strangers who had not listened to the wind as it whispered in the pines, nor conversed with the small tinkling stream.

When these men looked upon my mountain they counted only the board feet of lumber, the tons of coal, the house sites that could be graded. They counted not the autumn leaves or the beautiful hours of solitude that could be spent wandering the deep hollows and gentle slopes of my mountain.

I still love my mountain and always will, but I shall never return to it. If I should, I likely would not even recognize it as my old friend, for it has been slashed, scarred, battered and degraded. But when I do want to see my mountain I only need to close my eyes and dream. Once more I am a carefree, barefoot lad, romping across the hillside with my dog at my side, kicking the dry brown leaves before me. That's the way I always will remember my mountain.

THE RAPPAHANNOCK TOO FEW KNOW-

Fishin' The Snake Castle

By "BUNNY" HENSHAW
Charlottesville

"I'VE tried every way I know to learn how the "Snake Castle" got its name. But to date I've gotten no hint. The oldest of natives of that region say it's been known as that as far back as they can remember. My guess is that during the Civil War, as the Wilderness campaign was in progress, some soldier bestowed that name upon it. Nevertheless, whoever it was certainly had a flair for the romantic.

Here, as it wanders its way through the wilderness, the Rappahannock is interspersed with long, deep sections, each ending in a stretch of fast swirling water. From their appearance, the boulders with which it is studded could well be glacial deposits.

There is one place where the water flows through a passage cleft in towering solid rock that doesn't require much imagination to be seen as the moat protecting a nature-built castle. I can readily picture some war-weary sentry or scout naming this spot as he gazed upon a couple of rusty-looking water snakes, basking upon the parapet in the warm spring sunshine and digesting a dinner of smallmouth fingerlings taken from their sanctuary of driftwood against the face of a boulder.

Nowdays the name Snake Castle identifies this stretch of water, a scant mile in length, rather than any specific spot. Perhaps it always did; no one knows for sure. Here flows some of the finest all-around water on the face of the earth. Whether it's for fishing, swimming, canoeing, nature study or what-have-you, its beauty and remoteness remain virtually unspoiled; it's not overfished either. Being several miles downstream from the nearest public access at Kelly's Ford and more than a full day upstream from the nearest that way, it is naturally subjected to very little fishing pressure.

Float fishermen and canoeists come through there occasionally; but the fishermen are so much on the move that they hardly have time to work it properly, and canoe traffic is too light to keep the fish scared up.

Thanks to certain fortunate contacts we were invited to camp on some private river-bank property on the Snake Castle. Armed with an abundant supply of mad-toms, creek minnows, and soft crawfish we set out on one of the most enjoyable expeditions I have ever experienced. For this was to be a full week of carefree living on the river.

Our convoy really impressed the natives along those back-country roads. The Royal Coachman, Ltd., a Ford transit bus converted into a glorious land yacht, flying a C nfederate flag at the masthead and reading FISHIN' SPECIAL on the destination panel above the windshield, was a fitting leader for the canoe-capped station wagons which followed.

Arriving in the afternoon we devoted the rest of the day to setting up camp and getting organized. John Ashton, philosopher and chef without a peer, and by far the most important man in the outfit, as usual, arranged his department to suit himself. The rest of us took care of attaching the awning to the bus, launching the canoes, putting the bait in the river, and everything else in general. By suppertime all was in order for the lazy days to follow.

Our campsite was truly a "Story Book" spot. The lush meadow which went down to the willow-lined river bank overlooking a long, deep stretch of water had a stand of gigantic sycamores at one end through which flowed a small stream. This stream really paid off as we had to fall back on it for bait when our supply, which we had considered ample, was exhausted. This trip turned out to be one of those rare occasions when fishermen "hit it right." The river was clear after having run muddy for a pretty long spell, the fish were hungry as a

Our air driven canoe is really a fisherman's dream.

pack of wolves, and the weather stayed perfect.

The tranquility of that evening around the campfire, with the whip-poor-wills calling and the occasional splash of a fish feeding on top of the water, made it almost impossible to realize that the dense wilderness across the river had once been ablaze and shattered by the fury of battle. Over there, fellow Americans had slaughtered each other without mercy while hundreds of wounded were cremated in that inferno as they lay helpless upon the ground: it didn't make sense. But the scars of battle have long been healed, and we were there to enjoy ourselves in peace and quiet as God intended; not to dwell on a gruesome past.

The mist was still rising from the river when John Ashton called us to a breakfast that would have to be seen to be believed. After this early morning banquet Jack Camblos and I set out in an air-driven canoe. We had decidecd to fish the deep water in front of camp first, then drift our way down to where it was fast and broken to wade fish the pockets and eddies around the boulders. As we boarded the canoe John Ashton called to us from above, "Yawl git me uh eel." We assured him we would do our best as we went on our way.

Camblos got the first action on a madtom, when, after a little messing around the hungry fish took off like a freight train. The fight, which seemed to last for hours and all but tied a knot in his fly rod, had us both convinced that Jack had tied into the biggest bass in the world. He finally worked his catch up to the canoe and what should it be but John Ashton's eel. And it was a snorter too; over three feet long and as big around as your arm. We took it back to camp then and there. We weren't interested in worrying with that critter on a stringer all day.

John rewarded us all for this monster that night with a delicious blackberry roll made from berries he had picked along the near-by stream while we were away from camp for the day. John Ashton is gone now, God bless him, and our trips have never been the same.

One morning when "Skeeter" Haden and I were fishing together, Skeeter hooked what he thought was just another small bass. This thought was dispelled when the fish lit out across the river like his shirttail was on fire. After some prolonged, skillful playing Skeeter got his fish up into sight in the clear water. There on his hook was about a nine-inch bass which a tremendous pike had crosswise in his mouth like a dog retrieving a bird. That pike hung onto his prize like grim death, and only when I reached over the canoe with the net did he turn it loose and swirl off with what we took to be a look of disgust. The hook had never been near the pike and the bass was all but bitten in two.

VanLear returned to camp late one afternoon with the report that he had hung and lost "The Old Man of the Mountain" in one of a series of holes in the broken water downstream. He gave a very vivid description of how he had allowed the fish overtime on his second run. He could tell by the power of that run that he had a big one started, and he wanted to give him plenty of time to get that 'tom' well down his gullet. According to Van when the time was ripe, "I gave him a grade A jerk and he came all the way out the water and snapped my line like a pipestem. I got a good look at him and I'll guarantee he was over twenty-two inches long."

Van agreed to show me the hole the next day so I could try my hand against the monster if I would take us in my air-driven canoe so we wouldn't have to fight the current getting back up to camp. The next morning we went downstream; after reaching a series of holes, Van pointed to the one in question. I got out and he took the canoe down farther on the chance that the fish had moved downstream after his near disaster the evening before. Sure enough, I caught the fish which we could easily identify as he still had a brand new square shank hook in his jaw, and Van was the only one in the crowd using that type. He was a nice bass, just under fifteen inches. With complete frustration Van confessed he had put me off at the wrong place, and that sneaky fish had double-crossed him by coming upstream to my hole during the night.

None of us wanted to wipe out the breed, so beyond keeping enough to eat and a few huskies to show off we released the rest to go their way. How many fish were

(Continued on page 24)

Our camp at the Snake Castle. John Ashton is holding forth with some of his very pithy philosophy.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

GILES WINS GOVERNOR'S AWARD. The Virginia Wildlife Federation in conjunction with the National Wildlife Federation and the Sears-Roebuck Foundation have announced their annual conservation awards for Virginia. The Governor's award went this year to Dr. Robert Giles, Jr. of Blacksburg. Dr. Giles is professor of Wildlife Management, Principles of Wildlife Management, General Systems Ecology and Man and Environment at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Other winners include: CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION, City of Chesapeake's City Council and Chamber of Commerce; YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST, the student body of Churchland Junior High School; CONSERVATION EDUCATOR, Franklin D. Kizer, Supervisor of Science for the Virginia State Department of Education; RIVER CONSERVATIONIST, Mr. Peter Rowe, President of the Float Fishermen of Virginia; CLEAN AIR CONSERVATIONIST, Mrs. Elizabeth Haskall, State Air Pollution Control Board; LEGISLATIVE CONSERVATIONIST, Delegate James B. Murray of Earlysville; WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST, William Neal, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries; FOREST CONSERVATIONIST, Archie Leroy Wenrich, Continental Can Company; WATER CONSERVATIONIST, Eugene T. Jenson, Executive Secretary, State Water Control Board; CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS, David D. Ryan, Richmond Times Dispatch; SOIL CONSERVATIONIST, James C. Rea, Cartersville, Virginia.

JUDGE DENIES HUNTING INJUNCTION. Judge John Lewis Smith of the U.S. Court of the District of Columbia denied application by several preservation groups for a 10-day order enjoining hunting of snow geese, redbreasted mergansers, common mergansers and goldeneye ducks in connection with the 1975-76 waterfowl season on October 10th. At Presstime, the plaintiffs were seeking a preliminary injunction to stop hunting of the above mentioned species plus the Atlantic brant until a trial is completed. The plaintiffs were the Wildlife Preserve, Inc., Defenders of Wildlife, the Fund for Animals, the Humane Society of the United States (N.J. Branch), Deer, Ecology Environmental and Resources, Inc., Friends of the Earth and the Animal Protection Institute. The plaintiffs claim that the Fish and Wildlife Service did not comply with the National Environment Policy Act since they failed to file an environmental impact statement on proposed seasons for Atlantic brant. They claim that the species involved are covered by the 1972 treaty with Japan which requires that "optimum numbers" be maintained but said the populations were declining.

STATE BIG GAME TROPHY WINNERS ANNOUNCED. A 12-year-old Richmond boy was among the first place winners in the State Big Game Trophy Contest held in Newport News October 18. Wesley K. Stigall, from the Bon Air section of Richmond, was 1st place winner in Class III (6 points or less) with the trophy whitetail he took while hunting in New Kent County on November 29, 1974. Stigall's trophy was 6 pts. and scored 142 4/8. Top winner in the State Contest was J.B. Karnes of Bedford. His trophy 26 pt. buck received top honors in Class I (9 pts. or over) and scored 242 11/16. Karnes bagged the trophy in Bedford County November 18, 1974. Russell Rainey from Charlottesville took top honors in the Bow and Arrow Class with the deer he took on November 14, 1974 in Fluvanna County. Rainey is now the new State Archery record holder. His 23 point trophy received a score of 205 11/16 points. Class II honors (7 and 8 points) were taken by M. O. Vosburg or Monroe Virginia for the deer he took in Amherst County last hunting season. There were no state contest entries for bear.

BRIDGES:

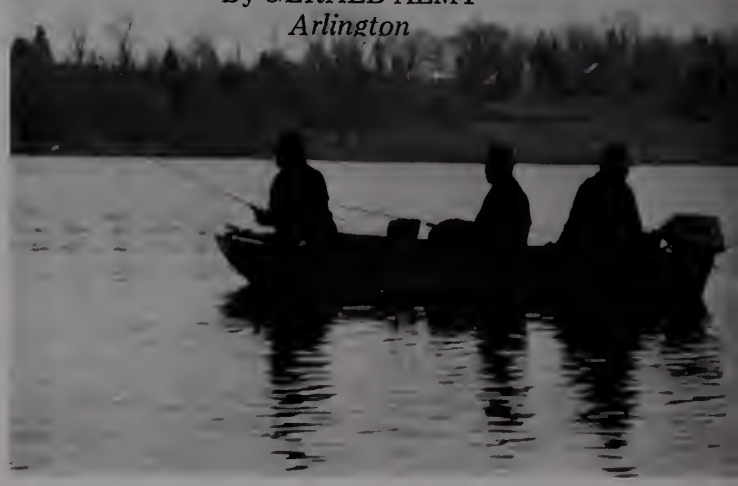
Good Bet for Fall Bass

By GERALD ALMY
Arlington

MICKEY Johnson and I had anchored out near the small bridge to try to stir up a speckled perch or two. On my first cast I felt the well-known tap tap of a taking fish. But this was no crappie. The fish moved off like an express train, stripping line from my reel like so much sewing thread. He seemed to be heading for the ocean. I only prayed that my drag wouldn't freeze up, and that Mickey, who was now pulling up the anchor and paddling frantically after the disappearing fish, wouldn't tire before the stubborn battler on the end of my line.

We hadn't seen the fish yet, but I nodded in silent agreement when Mickey muttered "rock" under his breath. I knew a largemouth or a big channel cat wouldn't take off like this behemoth was doing, and certainly not a crappie. The fish put up a sullen, bulldogging fight after we met his initial line-stripping lurch for freedom. Mostly he stayed deep, but twice the silver flashing stripes broke the surface in a display of brilliance as the rockfish came up with gills flared in anger. He was determined to throw the piercing hook, but luck was against him. After 15 minutes of exhaustive give and take, we managed to boat an exquisite striped bass of about nine pounds. I released him in the calm eddy where he regained his composure and swam back beneath the bridge.

This occurence took place last November on Lake Gaston, on the Virginia-North Carolina border, 15 miles west of I-95. I'd been fishing the impoundment with Mickey Johnson, who had just moved into his new home on the shores of this large lake. After helping him get settled in, we hit the water with a flurry of enthusiasm which dwindled quickly. After a day and a half fruitlessly searching for crappie, we were ready to admit defeat. It was time for me to head north to Arlington. But Mickey remembered being told by a neighbor that a certain bridge sometimes yielded some hefty specks. After lunch we headed for this bridge for one last try. Perhaps the fish would like the shade and cover the bridge offered.



We were in for a big surprise. That first rockfish was just the beginning of an exhilarating fish-fighting afternoon. Until sundown we had hectic action from 3 12-pound stripers and largemouths from 2-6 pounds apiece. Since then, Mickey and I have had numerous carbon copies of that day, landing and releasing rock and bass of a size that put vicious bends in our light rods. I've done a lot of pondering about why our tactics proved so effective, and the answers have enabled me to refine and tone up our strategy for taking stripers and bigmouths in the fall near bridges.

I feel a bit uneasy writing this, however. I can only hope you will release most of the fish you catch with this technique so they can fight again for other anglers. A live fish - sleek and quick, challenging our wits and skill - is more valuable an asset than a dull, stiffened fish staring glassy-eyed from the styrofoam cooler.

The secret to taking fall largemouths and stripers on Lake Gaston and other large impoundments is simple. The answer lies beneath, alongside, and around the bridges that cross these large bodies of water at so many spots. Fish the bridges in the fall with proper equipment and the necessary lures or bait at the right times and you will latch onto some fish that will give you cherished memories for years to come.

Largemouths and stripers are attracted to bridges in the fall as they provide fairly deep water and obstructions alongside which the fish can wait in ambush for unwary or wounded bait fish. Bridges often provide sharp dropoffs where stream beds flow beneath the bridge. Astute bass anglers know that bucketmouths are extremely fond of such structure. The third enticement is the rocky bottom that often results from bracing constructed for the bridge. Both bass, and as his name would imply, the rockfish, like such a bottom. And fourth, bridges offer shade and shelter from the sunlight that is anathema for big bass.

These reasons would probably be enough to attract a respectable number of bass, but bridges offer even more attractions to largemouths and rockfish. They frequently provide turbulent water, especially when constructed on masses of land that extend out into the lake, and are small, constricting necks on the large body of water that exists on each side of them. This turbulence occurs from three sources: flow of the river that was dammed up to create the lake, the alternate opening and closing of the gates on the dam, and the wind.

Both bass and stripers, and sometimes lunker crappies, are attracted to this turbulent water. Not only is it rich in oxygen, but it is loaded with food. Insects, wounded bait fish, and other morsels are washed through the stricture the bridge forms where it contracts the two large bodies of water on either side.

Fish lie near the bridges waiting for food funneled into these narrow passageways. They barely have to open their mouths and a first-class feast will be washed down their gullets. It's a fish's paradise, and a fisherman's too, if he knows how to take advantage of this potential. This is especially true in late fall months. During the dead of winter and the hot summer months, bass and rockfish generally school up in much deeper water. During spring, bass hug the shore line with mating on their minds. But in late fall, when temperatures are cooling, fish invariably frequent the bridges - for the reasons listed earlier, and to gorge themselves in order to build up layers of fat to tide them over lean winter months.

But rockfish and largemouths congregate at the bridges not only to consume the dead and wounded that get washed to them, but also to feed on the living. Schools of minnows like to hang out in these funnel-like areas found at bridges too. They feed on the vegetative matter and small insects that get washed through the narrow passages. And they like the high oxygen content of the turbulent water.

Threadfin shad especially frequent these areas where the water is turbulent and flowing. Their metabolism requires a well aerated environment, generally provided by short bridges. Shad are the primary food source for both stripers and largemouths in large impoundments such as Lake Gaston. Sometimes if the water is clear, you can see the large numbers of shad schooled up, moving slowly along the shore adjacent to bridges. I've seen times when they were so thick you snagged them as you retrieved a lure or baited hook through the water. Little wonder bass and rock hang out around bridges!

To summarize, minnows and shad come into the funnel-like areas that bridges create for the well-oxygenated water they find there, and to feed on the plankton and small insects that get washed into the narrow passage. Bass, both stripers and bigmouths, follow the bait fish in to feed on them and to take advantage of the dark rocky structure, dropoffs, and ambush points offered by the bridges, as well as for the high oxygen content of the water. The fishermen then follow the bass to "feed on" them (though not literally, I hope.) It's the archetypal chain of eat and be eaten. Old Darwin had a lesson for us fishermen. This may all sound like rather elaborate theorizing, but I think two solid facts confirm my hypotheses. One: the great fishing I've found around bridges in the late fall months. Two: autopsies done on several fish stomachs. In each case I found their gullets crammed with decomposed remains of either shiners or shad.

Knowing that big bass and rockfish hang around bridges during autumn on Gaston and other large impoundments, and knowing why they hang around them should dictate where, when and how you fish for them. As far as productivity goes, 4-5 inch live minnows take the cake. When fish are feeding on live minnows, you know they will be feeding. Dropping a struggling min-

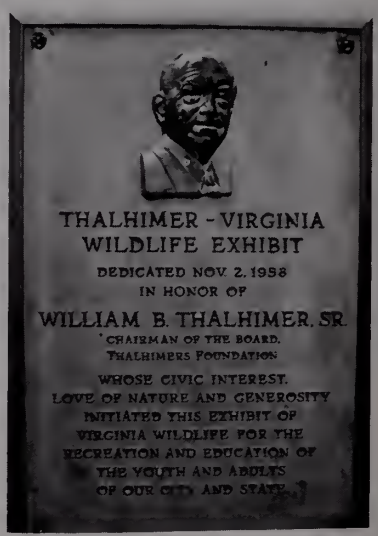
(Continued on page 19)

Six pound largemouth taken beneath bridge on Lake Gaston.

FOCUS
MAY

Fox

Deer



Elk

Donkey

ON
MONT

Bison

By CHARLES E. NIMMO, JR.
Williamsburg

Goose

MAYMONT Park is a paradise for nature photographers located in the middle of Richmond just minutes away from the downtown business area. It consists of 105 acres of natural scenic beauty which offer the casual snapshooter or the serious lensman a variety of interesting subjects.

Formerly the private estate of Major and Mrs. Dooley, Maymont was willed to the citizens of Richmond in 1925. In 1945 William B. Thalhimer, Sr., presented a monetary gift for the establishment of a permanent exhibit of native Virginia wildlife. This project became a reality some years later and a number of animals were provided by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Originally, Maymont was maintained by the City of Richmond but now it is under the management of the Maymont Foundation, a non-profit charitable corporation.

An estimated 150,000 persons visit Maymont each year, and for many of them it is their first opportunity to observe wildlife at close range. Those who are camera enthusiasts can have a field day filming awesome buffalo, majestic elk, sharp-eyed fox and friendly deer. In addition to the animals, there are birds, beautiful flowers, and scenic landscapes just waiting to be recorded. The photographer who has a keen eye and a little patience will be richly rewarded with some memorable pictures to share with his family and friends.

Pelican

INVISIBLE TROPHIES

By BILL ANDERSON
Haysi

THE shrill, high-pitched scream caused me to freeze in my tracks. For an instant I didn't know where the sound had come from, but it definitely wasn't a turkey. An instant later I spotted a huge hawk circling beneath the almost bare branches of the early spring oak forest. In the crotch of a gnarled oak tree that appeared to be the center of the graceful bird's orbit, I observed what appeared to be the nucleus of a new nest. For several minutes only the hawk and I occupied the forest, me frozen to the earth in fascination, the hawk excitedly protesting my intrusion into its domain. Around and around she flew, sometimes swooping uncomfortably close.

My attention was suddenly brought back to earth by the brisk snapping of dead tree branches to my right and above me on the mountainside. Three deer were making their way along an almost obscure path that wound its way to within ten yards of my position and intersected the trail I was on. The deer had attracted my attention as they trampled through dry branches of a fallen tree, but now they moved through the woods as silently as the gentle morning breeze that touched my face. Every few yards they stopped, all at the same instant as if by signal. Long necks craned this way and that, nostrils twitching, testing the spring air. Six ears were flared, ready to note the first sounds of danger. I held my breath and stood rooted, unblinking for fear these agile animals would somehow detect my presence. I did not want to upset their early morning affairs. As the deer passed me, I could distinguish separate gray-brown hairs on their bodies, they were so close. No air current or movement betrayed me, and my camouflage clothes well served their purpose.

Then they were gone. It was as if everything had been a figment of my imagination. The hawk was silent now as was all the woods except for an occasional bird call. I walked slowly to the deer trail. There was no sign the three deer had passed so recently. I swiveled my head in the direction I last remembered seeing the hawk. It was perched quietly on a horizontal limb high in the old oak tree in which the nest was being built. As unobtrusively as possible I slipped one foot ahead of the other and moved slowly up the trail.

On that particular spring morning I was turkey hunting. And although I did not carry home a turkey to grace our humble kitchen table, the invisible trophies I brought from the forest will forever grace my memories.

Every hunter who has been afield for more than a season can recall observing animals in their environment, undisturbed. Not necessarily fantastic events, but memorable ones. Or maybe it's not an animal we remember. Possibly it's an unusually beautiful sunrise above a snowclad mountain. But, whatever, poorer by far is the outdoorsperson who doesn't take the time to see, to observe, and to appreciate nature. He who does take the time will have a richer, fuller appreciation of our outdoor world. Not only that; if he takes the time to watch, to learn, his knowledge will be broadened and he may even go home with a heavier game bag due to this new knowledge.

A friend and I were deer hunting in my native southwest Virginia, an area that can rival any in the world for natural beauty. Two men from an adjoining state were camped near us. One midday I stopped by our temporary neighbors' travel trailer to see how their hunting was going. The one man in camp was in a vile mood. He hadn't seen, swore he, a deer, much less had a chance to shoot at one. He proclaimed his entire trip a total flop. His one and only interest was to shoot a deer.

Conversely, my buddy and I had a jolly time, even though we had problems, like our heating system conking out on us. We were determined to enjoy ourselves and we did. We were alert to every sound, scent and movement in the forest. The woods were not overcrowded with hunters and it was a memorable, if brief, hunt. We even killed a deer apiece!

Another friend, an excellent small game hunter and a

good trapper, had had a bad time trying to kill a whitetail. Eventually he scored and was elated. In all confidence he told me that on top of his car was the first deer he had tagged since he began hunting them several years ago. His words: "That deer represents ten years of deer hunting. That's all I ever got out of it."

Good Lord, I thought. If that's all I got out of hunting, that cold, dead carcass, I would never have braved the rain, snow and wind, or those cold wintry mornings. I don't particularly enjoy breakfast at 3:30 a.m. I would have bought beef at the local grocery store. It would have been much more convenient and maybe less expensive over the long haul.

Don't misunderstand me. I DO go hunting mainly to shoot game, but that's not the only reason I hunt. If killing animals, or completely filling my bag limit, was my only goal, I would probably suffer intolerably. Often my kill of game doesn't meet my expectations, but because of my appreciation for nature my hunts aren't ruined by a light game bag. Fact is, if I enjoyed only the killing, I would have retired my hunting guns long ago. No greater value has hunting than the aesthetic values derived from this fine sport. Impoverished is the hunter who has never watched a fox hunt mice along an ancient rail fence, bleached almost white by time and weather. The hunter who has never taken a few minutes to watch a sunrise doesn't realize the complete outdoor experience. Each hunt should be felt with every emotion, from beginning to end. If not, you are wasting much precious time.

One evening last spring my wife and I were bumping along in our station wagon over a dirt road in the Jefferson National Forest. The sun had already dropped behind the rugged Appalachians and we knew darkness would soon catch us. We had been in the area before and knew where we wanted to pitch our tent.

A movement beneath the pines caught my eye as we approached our selected spot. Not sure of what I had seen, I asked, "What was that?"

"Grouse," she replied. "There's two of them."

Indeed there were. And we were in for a treat. The hen, very businesslike and nonchalant, was going about the serious business of eating, or at least pretending to. Her suitor paraded about in full ruff trying to win her attention. With his feathers spread he appeared twice as large as she. He strutted back and forth like a miniature tom turkey, but the hen, undaunted, ladylike and aloof, continued to feed. However, she made quite sure she stayed close him. If he moved away, her feeding somehow led in his direction. Once he became flustered and charged toward her, but she merely ran a few feet and again began eating. Although we were only 15 yards away, neither grouse seemed to notice the large metal monster that was noiseless on the road. The beautiful art of courting kept both birds preoccupied. We watched until it was so late we could wait no longer.

At our approach they fled into the deeper woods nearby, but were still only a few yards away. As we lay in our sleeping bags that night the grouse drummed. It was the only time I have ever heard a grouse fan the air at night, but drum he did, until we fell asleep.

Fond memories, often funny, may not be so laughable at the time. Sometime back, a friend of mine was deer hunting along a mountaintop. He had chosen a stand in a likely spot and things were looking up. Shortly, my friend's attention was attracted by a rustling of leaves. He turned his head slowly, expecting to see a deer. No such luck. He was staring into the eyes of two not-so-shy skunks. The two striped "kittens" paid the hunter no mind. They meandered about. Flustered and unsure, the poor hunter in desperation eased slowly away from his stand. Again the deer hunter settled his back against a rough bark oak in hope of seeing ole mossyhorn come across the ridge. But behold, he had not been there ten minutes until his little friends ambled along to keep him company. Again they appeared to ignore him as they circled and recircled his stand. Finally he decided there must be a better chance of shooting a deer far away on the next ridge. Without as much as a farewell he lit out.

With more than 30 years in the outdoors, I have hundreds of memories, all outstanding, at least for me. When the chase is over and the venison eaten there are still the memories forever with us. If you are an outdoorsman I don't have to explain it to you. There was the giant, heavy-beamed buck standing majestically, while I stood with no gun. Perhaps the best trophies are not always carried out to hang on the wall or be eaten. At any rate, never judge your success only by the weight of your game bag. You'll miss too much.

Dumb Mistakes (Continued from page 8)

used for dove hunting the week before, only to have him phone me two days later to say he had poison ivy from head to toe.

I try not to bring my troubles home after a hunt or to take them out on the wife and kids. Even this good intention sometimes backfires. I thought I would surprise my wife one evening with a brace of grouse - only to discover, as I was about to clean them in the kitchen sink, that one had "revived" during the trip home. Water exploded everywhere, sending my screaming wife out the patio door.

By now you are probably saying you wouldn't dare go into the woods with me unless my luck changed. I am hopeful there is at least one other poor fool around who has shared similar experiences.

Hunting blends the hits with the misses. My "mistakes" hurt only for a little while; some you remember while others fade from memory like sore feet after a day-long hunt. It takes a sportsman to laugh at his own foolish maneuvers. I find a sense of amusement in those crazy days in the wild and wouldn't trade them for anything.

THE POND

By MARVIN E. GARRETTE
Richmond

MINE is the lot of an increasing number of Virginians in an increasingly urban state. By chance and by design I live in a heavily populated metropolitan area, surrounded by forests and streams, yet cut off from them. By choice, the residents of this area have rejected several plans to provide public parks where I could take my children to fish, my dog to walk or myself to be alone.

But the Pond became that place. Its owners were a prosperous farming region family of long standing in conservation efforts, generous in their tradition of allowing neighbors free access to their own recreation refuge. By local standards, it's large, 50 acres, fed by springs and a fresh stream, lined on more than half of its banks with overhanging weeping willows, redbud and scrub pines. Besides being a pleasant setting, the undergrowth offered a nesting place for red-winged blackbirds and a hatchery for late-evening bugs to fall into the water, tempting the bass to rise. Here, underneath the overhang at sunset, it was almost impossible not to bring up a half dozen pan-sized bream and a few 10-12-inch bass with a rubber-legged spider on a flyrod.

Out in the channel, maybe 15 feet deep, there was always a chance for a several-pound blue-backed catfish. Up near the marsh, where the wood ducks staked out their claim between the rotting stumps, the bass spawned in the spring and a few 5 to 7 pounders were taken.

My usual route was to paddle the shoreline in my broken-spined, self-fiberglassed canvas canoe, watching the banks for a glimpse of a browsing deer, casting a popping bug for that elusive trophy bass and creating images of myself as Hemingway's Nick Adams or Cooper's Pathfinder, master of myself and all outdoors. Granted, my catch was usually the kind of perch they say takes two pounds of lard to cook a pound of fish. But I could always rationalize that being a sport fisherman is superior to being a meat fisherman. (Definition of sport fisherman: one who doesn't catch much).

But there were some interesting catches. Late one evening, as the sun dropped over the pasture on the far side, I asked Dave to paddle me along the bank for a last few casts. The bass bug looped past my ear and landed somewhere in the darkness underneath a redbug branch, rested and then erupted, arching the rod, tipping the canoe. I'd never felt a rod tip thrash like that, whipping its length in uneven surges, erratic and strange, not like the steady runs of the two-pounders I usually ranked as top catches. And making crazy on-top-of-the-water runs in zagging patterns.

"Stay cool," Dave said from the stern; "just lift the rod enough to bring him up to the gunwales' edge so I can reach down to boat him." I did and Dave did, and we looked through the near-black evening mists into two angered eyes of a six-foot snake.

There was a pier jutting down the dam where schools of silvers offered fishing all winter. One warm Sunday, neighbor Andy picked me up to take a ride with Uncle Barty, who, well into his 80's, still talked of his days of fishing half a century before. We ended up at the Pond, where I watched him cane-pole two dozen of those fat crappie into a hamper, an old man, stooped and shuffling, grateful enough just for someone to ride him around on a Sunday, but ecstatic at the unexpected chance to show he could still outcatch these young upstarts with their fancy spinning rigs. (Maybe we need an Izaak Walton version of Big Brothers, in reverse.)

My daughters had been growing up thinking Byrd Park was the unspoiled wilderness, assuming that wads of tissue grew naturally on all lake banks. Then we found the Pond and the girls found their own piece of the outdoors. We would paddle cautiously into a willow-lined cove and wait for the beaver to hiss his displeasure at us for invading his private pond.

It was here, in this simple place of water and weeds and stumps, that I realized my daughters could each be totally different people when alone. Together they were a pair of sisters, reacting jointly, for some reason without waiting for me to talk, to point out, to show. Apart, each would be more individual, perceptive, alert to point out to me some animal sign on the shore, some bream bed in the flats.

It was on one of these one-daughter excursions that we paddled onto the far end one evening and Jessie, at age 6, softly cried out, "Daddy there's a water monster with green hair following us." Good old Dad calmly turned around to reassure her it was only a moss-covered stump and saw - a water monster with green hair following us.

For nearly a quarter of an hour we played canoe tag with this misplaced Loch Ness creature as it dived down, leaving a 20-foot water bubble trail for us to follow, surfacing again with a Medusa-festoon of green curls from the Pond bottom, diving again in another direction. (Later, we were told by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries it was probably an otter.)

Cathy was less enthusiastic as a fisherman. Though even at age seven she could handle the canoe well enough for us to fish, she wasn't very interested herself. Perhaps it was that Jess, though younger, always landed more than she - or me.

But there was the evening of small pleasures for me when, with just the two of us, Cathy found a new catfish hole - two, three, half a dozen one-pounders on the string in half an hour. And they kept biting for her. At 9 o'clock, moonless pitch black, my hands cold from re-baiting her hook, I kicked over the minnow bucket so we could go home.

It was like this for about four years, a series of growing-up experiences for my daughters, of these small pleasures for me, of watching the deer graze the banks, a fox stalking a quail. And water snakes masquerading as citation bass.

And then They came, leaving the predictable trails of cans, wadded-up bags, more cans.

Before, the Pond fostered a sort of common bond, a shared trust by those privileged to use it. A medical intern who jogged the banks readily introduced himself and, after a moment's chat said: "Look, I keep a boat up under the bushes. It's not chained, use it anytime." And a farmer employee, whose name I never knew, always urged, "Stop at the house when you bring your daughters so they can fish with my grandson."

But They changed it all. A midnight party of swimmers. A pickup truck at dawn that left with a half dozen of the unchained boats on the spillway. A "hunter" who killed one of the tame ducks. A stolen 35 h.p. motor from the farm boat. Another "hunter" shot the boat's hull.

And then the letter: "In order to stop this traffic, we are closing the lake effective this date."

That was four years ago. The chain on the farm lane leading to the Pond is still securely padlocked.

Bridges: Good Bet (Continued from page 13)

now on a hook in their midst is a sure-fire tactic for quick action. Use a light-action rod so you can feel the minnow as you crawl it over the bottom of the lake and detect the slightest suspicious tug or movement that may signal a pickup. Either spinning or bait-casting reels will do, so long as they have a smooth drag that won't jam up when a 12-pound rock takes off for the other end of the lake. Either 10- or 12-pound test monofilament should fill your reel to capacity. Heavier line will decrease strikes if the water is at all clear.

I've tried jigs, spinnerbaits, plugs and streamers on bridge dwellers, and all will fool a few fish. But the live minnow gets about twice as many strikes as any lure I've tried to date. If you don't like bait fishing, use lures. If you want the most action possible, fill your ice chest with the biggest minnows you can get - usually 4-6 inches around here. Stock up with more than you think you'll need. They go fast at a hot spot short on bait.

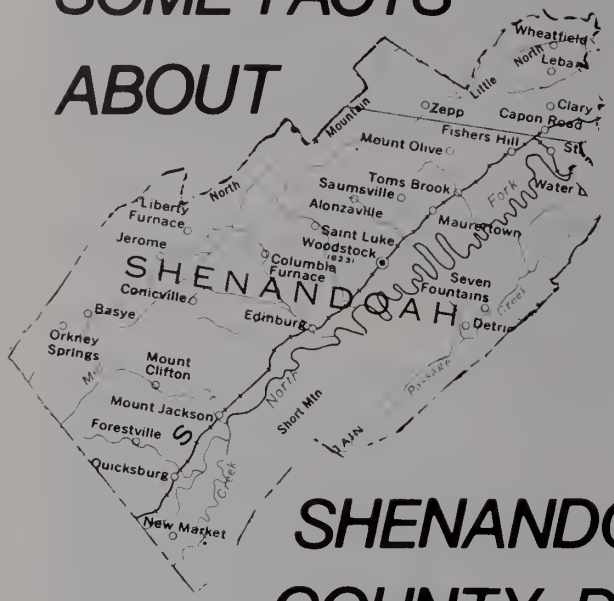
A number four hook with two small split shot attached 12 and 16 inches above the bait completes the rig. Small hooks decrease hangups, yet are large enough to hook any fish you'll encounter. Hook the minnow through the lips. This allows you to manipulate them through the water with a more life-like crippled look than if the bait fish was dragged along by its back. It also keeps the minnow lively longer, and holds him on the hook better when casting than the back-hooking method.

Anchor your boat in the eddy which forms when water flows through the narrowing channel of the bridge. From here it is easy to cast out and "up" into the current so that the minnow will sing rapidly and be bounced along the bottom of the lake where the fish lie.

Sometimes bass and rockfish will hold tight in close to the bridge abutments. At other times they are found farther out in the lake waiting for the food to be washed out to them, perhaps as much as 100-200 feet from the bridge. Try both sides of the bridge. I have not found any consistent pattern of the fish sticking to one side or another according to the direction the water is flowing. The situation here is analogous to that of a trout stream riffle - fish will be found above the riffle

(Continued on page 24)

SOME FACTS ABOUT SHENANDOAH COUNTY DEER



By MAX CARPENTER
Game Biologist

IN the northwestern part of Virginia (particularly Shenandoah County) some objection has been raised to allowing doe deer to be harvested. Hunters would like to see more deer in the woods, and they fear too many will be shot if there is a season on doe. A general guide used by the Game Commission is to favor a season wherein females make up about 30 percent of the total harvest. However, no attempt is made to change the season for one or two counties if the doe kill runs above 30 percent of the total harvest. To do this would shift too much hunting pressure to nearby counties, which would result in their deer herds being overhunted. A review of the deer data for Shenandoah County perhaps will explain the reasoning behind the Game Commission's desire to harvest doe deer, not only in Shenandoah County, but in others as well.

Around 1920 it was a rare thing to see a deer track in Shenandoah. Old records indicate there was a season on deer in 1928, which was about the same time some were being stocked by private individuals. Later, from 1932 to 1941, over 100 deer from Pennsylvania and Michigan were stocked in various parts of the county. Some hunting of bucks was allowed at the time they were being stocked; however, only a few were harvested and the herd grew rapidly during the following years. Within 15 years, in 1956, there was a record harvest of 2,840 deer, which shows the great reproductive capacity of the white-tailed deer. Records compiled by the Game Commission since that first season show that over 32,000 deer have been harvested in Shenandoah County, including the 1974 harvest.

Over the year some excellent data have been collected at the various big game checking stations. This would not have been possible except for the many individuals who have set up these check stations in their store, shop or filling station. To get additional data from a particular area or county, biologists spend a couple days at check stations each deer season. During this time each deer brought to the station is aged according to tooth replacement and amount of wear on the molars. Weights and condition of yearling bucks are especially noted, for it is this group of deer that makes up the greatest percent of the harvest.

Information gathered at the check stations helps answer many questions. For instance, some hunters maintain that deer are getting smaller each year. However, if weights of the same aged deer are compared, the facts do not indicate this. Weights taken at Mt. Jackson's South End Grocery for the last 12 years indicate that weights of yearling bucks have fluctuated only from 88 to 104 pounds, which is excellent for this age deer.

If the 18-month old deer, or yearlings as they are called, are healthy, only a small percent will have spikes. To say it another way, a greater number will have branched antlers with 4, 6 or even 8 points. The deer were in excellent shape in the early sixties when weights were above 100 pounds and the percent of spikes was low. A 100-pound hog-dressed yearling deer would have tipped the scales when alive at 130 pounds.

It has been customary at the Mt. Jackson station to record the weights of all deer checks. It is interesting to note that average weights of the bucks above 2 points have not varied much since 1955.

There are several indicators to use to judge the size of a deer herd. One is that when a large number of deer can be seen, there are too many for the range to feed. This was true in Shenandoah County from 1956 to 1960 when over 2,000 deer were harvested each year for the five years. Damage to orchards and crops during that time was very heavy, and it was necessary to control the herd through doe harvest. The deer harvest in Shenandoah County since 1952 indicates that two or three days of doe shooting during the middle fifties produced a harvest of over 50 percent doe which was too high. Since 1968 when the doe day came at the end of the season, the kill has been 30 percent or below.

To some degree, hunting is self regulating. If the deer population drops, hunters find it harder to see them and either stop hunting or move to new areas that have more deer. This happened in Shenandoah County after the big drop in harvest in 1962. The hunting pressure has remained fairly constant since then, permitting the deer herd to slowly build up again.

From the statistics that are available, the condition of the Shenandoah County deer herd looks good. Harvest during the last four years has been on an increase. Range conditions are good and should stabilize if herd control is maintained, and we of the Game Commission feel it is necessary to keep in force a "doe day" in order to maintain the status quo.

When heavy equipment redistributed this formerly well-packed streambed, the water sank underground.

Channelization (Continued from page 6)

SCS employs to reduce or mitigate damage when streams are channelized. These include installing sediment traps, low-line weirs, limiting clearing of vegetation to minimum amounts, leaving trees that are at least 10 inches in diameter, and prohibiting mowing during bird nesting season. (Although not currently engaged in any channelization work in the state, the SCS has already channelized some 800 miles of Virginia streams.)

Frank Barrett of the North Carolina Resources Commission asked Mr. Thomas why, in the "impressive and beneficial list of channelization practices," there was no mention of any attempts to retain the original configuration of the stream, with its loops and bends, riffles and pools. Mr. Thomas replied that, although he didn't include it in his list, "consideration is always given to staying in the lines of the existing stream."

Dr. C. Grant Ash of the Corps' Washington, D.C. office confined his remarks to the problem of disposing of dredged materials from waterways, without mentioning channelization. (The Corps is responsible for channelization of some of Virginia's largest rivers.) However, in response to a question during the evening panel discussion, Dr. Ash made a statement that was welcome to fishermen's ears: "No one in the Corps thinks we have a better fishery after it's been channelized. Our policy is not to channelize unless you have to. We've been challenged, properly, on some of the channelization we've done in the past. We'd been using those techniques a long time, and we had a lot of educating to do. But we're coming along. We had to get people who've been doing things one way to turn around, and look for alternatives."

Robert Hundley, environmental quality engineer with the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation, candidly met the issue head on. "There are 2,000 examples in the state of some type of stream channel modification by our department," he said. "Every stream in the state of Virginia is crossed many times by at least one of the 55,000 miles of roads. Many of the streams affected by our projects involve bridge clean-outs, as we call them, which, admittedly, sometimes extend further than clearing out a stream under a bridge. Sometimes we get overly enthusiastic about making sure that water gets on under our bridge, or landowners plead with our resident engineer and we have 'dozers in the stream before we know it."

Highway engineers have been traditionally concerned with drainage, said Mr. Hundley. "If you can keep water away from your structure and off the road, you've decreased maintenance," he said. "But the environmental section of the department now have the know-how, the expertise to tell us where to cut off work, and when not to go any farther."

According to those who have protested the highway department's former channelization, recent projects bear out Mr. Hundley's statements. "Here's an agency that's been willing to work things out without being backed to the wall, or being taken to court," said Jerry Schuder after the symposium. "I feel the Virginia Department of Highways is making a sincere effort to modify their practices and to keep stream damage to a minimum in highway construction and maintenance."

The sole representative of the Richmond office of the SCS registered at the symposium was panelist Franklin Dugan, who had a lot of tough questions to answer. Mr. Dugan drew considerable fire from the audience when he made the following statement: "There is not a single 566 project that has been concluded in Virginia where the overall fish and wildlife population is not greater now than before the project was instigated." There was a moment of silence as the remark sank in. Then a murmur rippled through the audience. Several people walked to the microphone at the other end of the room. Gladys Harris of the Izaak Walton League, demanded proof of Mr. Dugan's statement and asked, "What about the emergency stream work?

It was the closest the powder keg came to exploding. But the lid stayed on. Session chairman Dr. Robert F. Raleigh of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reminded

Dr. Robert Raleigh chairs the panel discussion.

the gathering of the spirit of their symposium, and reason returned.

One positive outcome of the syposium were the papers presented by researchers, providing carefully documented evidence of specific damage caused by channelization and the effects of attempts to mitigate stream damage.

Artificial riffles in a newly modified section of an Ohio stream helped save certain species of fish, reported Clayton Edwards of the Ohio Cooperative Fishery Research Unit at Ohio State University, although the natural area harbored more species.

The audience was reminded that the studies presented applied in specific areas, and not necessarily to all streams. For instance, Steven W. Carothers of the research center at the Museum of Northern Arizona said he and a colleague have found that the removal of vegetation during channelization projects is spelling the demise of many common birds of his state. But except for the immediate riparian habitat, the streams there are flanked by desert, and offer no place for the birds to go - not the case in most Eastern states.

However, there are many instances where the studies can be applied more generally. Dr. Richard Graham, supervisor of Cooperative Fishery and Wildlife Units, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said that a six-mile stretch of wild trout stream in Montana had been reduced in length by 40 percent with a 68 percent increase i. slope through channelization projects over a 27-year period, so that "the problem of flooding was transferred on downstream by shooting the water through the channelized section much faster." The theory applies on any stream.

There are hydrologists, scientists and biologists in Virginia who have the training to compare stream habitats and to point out similarities to studies that have been done. The difficulty is often one of politics. At present, there is no place for citizen input before a bulldozer gets in a stream. Unfortunately, those who have the responsibility of channelizing streams have seldom been required to prove their work will be more beneficial than harmful. The burden of proof lies with the fisherman. The outdoorsman. With those who see fish and wildlife being affected, or who are disturbed by the need for continual maintenance and the threat of even more serious flooding and erosion that faulty channelization brings.

Two symposium speakers strongly advised anyone concerned about the channelization issue to work with their state legislators. To speak out. To write letters. To promote in any way they can legislation that will provide for citizens to have a part in the planning stages of stream projects. "We've got to avoid the reactionary position we find ourselves in," said Dr. Alfred C. Fox, chief of the Division of Ecological Services with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "By the time we find out what's going on, the project's half done and the agencies have to defend their project on principle."

With a law that provides for landowners to get financial assistance for channelization on their property, at taxpayers' expense, "we're dealing with a stacked deck," said Dr. Laurence Jahn of the Wildlife Management Institute. "Emergency relief funds need to be watched very, very carefully. We're going to have to reshuffle that deck and be sure there are 52 cards, with no jokers."

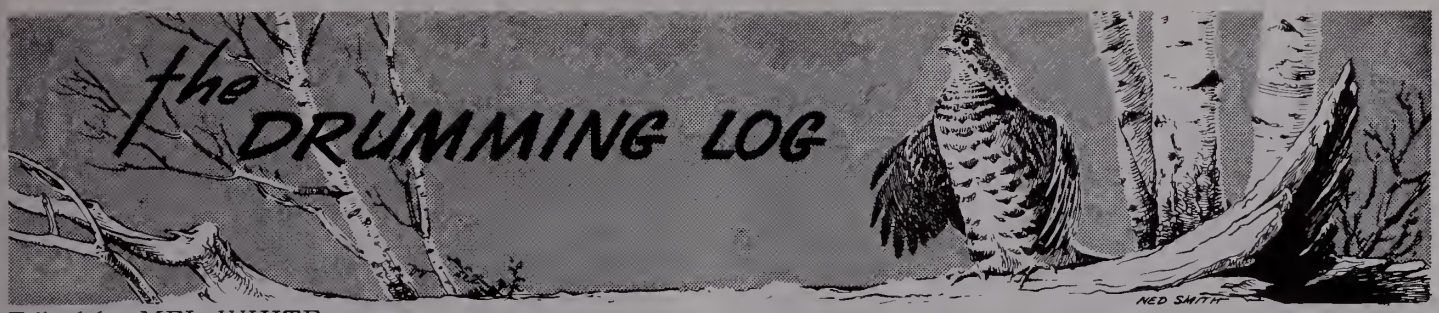
Two busloads of symposium participants stayed for a tour of area streams the third day, while others joined in a citizens' forum led by Mr. Corning.

Most of the channelization work shown on the tour had been done by the Office of Emergency Preparedness or by private landowners. The bus stopped at a small bridge. Lee Noon of the symposium steering committee explained that extensive channel work was done upstream for 6½ miles after floods rose above the bridge. But the work was so extensive that the stream now has a constantly shifting bed load, requiring maintenance at regular intervals to keep the bed load from filling up the channel under the bridge.

At another site, the group saw a long, straight stretch of channelized stream banked with river rock - an attempt to carry water on past a nearby home which had been endangered by a spring flood. "The work done here is of a temporary nature," said speaker Urbie Nash. "Bed load from upstream will cause blockage of the channel. The material used for bank reconstruction came from the stream bottom, which was washed there from upstream by previous flooding. This material will not remain stable during future flooding." He suggested the use of rip-rap (heavy stone) with a wide, dry flood channel to protect the house, and proper revegetation to stabilize the bank and protect downstream development.

Perhaps the most memorable site was at a high bridge where extensive channelization had been done for about 300 yards upstream. The result was a very wide, rocky streambed, completely dry even in moderately wet seasons, although the stream still flowed before it got to the channelized segment. Where did the water go? Tom Evans of the steering committee began lifting rocks under the bridge until he found the stream - underground, where it seeped through the broken hard pan.

But all this is only to skim the surface of the symposium. There was much more. Candid discussions. Unforgettable remarks. Valuable research reports. It's all available for anyone who can use it. The information has been transcribed from tape and is being compiled in what Jerry Schuder said would be "a publication with a lasting impact." Anyone interested in obtaining this publication (for a nominal charge) should write Symposium, 160 DuPont Circle, Waynesboro, Va. 22980, or call 703/943-2328.



Edited by MEL WHITE

Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr., center, receives a copy of "Virginia's Resources," presented to him by Chester F. Phelps, left, Executive Director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and by Hensel T. Smith, right, President of the Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA). The Virginia Game Commission and the 5000-plus members of the Virginia IWLA jointly funded the publication of the 80 page book, which is being distributed free of charge to all schools in the Commonwealth

Recovery Team for Endangered Squirrel

The Delmarva fox squirrel's chances for survival on Maryland's eastern shore have been enhanced by the establishment of a cooperative Federal-State-university team of experts who will give priority to restoring this large squirrel to its former healthy state.

Heading up the Delmarva fox squirrel recovery team is Bernard F. Halla of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Other team members are Dr. Vagn Flyger of the University of Maryland and William Julian of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nelson Swink of the Service has been named a consultant to the team.

The team's primary objective is to guide actions to restore the Delmarva fox squirrel to as much of its former range as possible, after drawing up a detailed plan which will schedule specific actions needed.

The Delmarva fox squirrel *(Sciurus niger cinereus)* is a large, grayish colored tree squirrel. It once ranged throughout the Delmarva (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia Peninsula, southeastern Pennsylvania and possibly southern New Jersey. At present it is confined to portions of Kent, Queen Anne's Talbot and Dorchester counties in eastern Maryland.

The distribution of the Delmarva fox squirrel apparently has always been discontinuous, with the animal preferring patches of forest habitat with an open understory. As lumbering occurred over the past century, much suitable habitat was lost. At the same time the way was opened for an increase by the common gray squirrel, and the latter competed with the fox squirrel for food and nesting resources. Even with these problems, the Delmarva fox squirrel remained relatively common on Maryland's eastern shore until about 20 years ago. Subsequent human developments, accelerated by completion of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, have brought about a rapid decline in fox squirrel numbers. With increasing demands for recreational facilities and housing, the downward trend by the squirrel could be expected to continue. The gray squirrel adapts to such environmental alterations, but the fox squirrel does not.

Bridges: Good Bet (Continued from page 19)

where the water flow picks up speed and is funneled into the rapids, and below the riffle where food gathers in the turbulent water at the head of the pool.

After casting "up" against the current, let the minnow sink to the bottom. Keep excessive slack out of your line so you won't miss a pickup on the drop. When the minnow touches bottom, begin your retrieve, which should be very slow, like you would fish a plastic worm. Work the bait fish with occasional slight twitches, but not violent sweeping jerks. You want the minnow to tease the fish by fluttering seemingly endlessly in front of him; keep it slow and enticing. Some bass simply inhale the minnow and glide off nonchalantly. These are often very large bass; be prepared if a fish takes like this. Others tap at the bait and chew on it. Still others grab the bait and take off like a bolt of lightning. Regardless of the manner of pickup, open your bail, or put your bait-casting reel on free spool and feed line out to the fish sparingly as he takes it. There is no need to give him much time to run with the minnow. A large fish will invariably take the minnow fully in his mouth; this is the time to hit him, about 5 seconds after he grabs the bait.

If you are using a light rod, you must strike hard to imbed the hook in the tough tissue of the bass's inner mouth. But a broomstick isn't necessary for this task if hooks are kept sharp so they will penetrate easily. It is important to set the hook quickly when fishing with live minnows, so the fish doesn't swallow the hook and get it lodged in his stomach. If this does happen and you want to release the fish, cut your line as close to the hook as you can and return the fish to the water anyway, unless he is bleeding. The digestive juices will eat away the hook eventually. But if you strike just a few seconds after the pickup, you will seldom have any fish swallow the hook.

Nets are handy to land the really big ones, but most can be boated by using the lower lip grip or the belly lift, which temporarily immobilizes the fish.

Few people realize that November and December offer striper and bass fishing on large impoundments such as Gaston that is equal to, if not superior to, that of the spring-feeding frenzy. Fish can be found around bridges all year round, but they seem to congregate most heavily at these locations during fall and early winter months. November and December are best at Lake Gaston. At other lakes, depending upon whether they are farther north or south, the best periods will be later or earlier.

Both North Carolina and Virginia licenses are honored on this lake. But there is no need to go to this particular spot if you have a large impoundment near your home with bass and/or rockfish, and bridges that cross the waterway. Try this technique on your home waters and see if you don't connect.

Combination Trip (Continued from page 5)

mild climate we enjoy and they are hoisting some of the heftiest bass and trout of the season from Old Dominion waters. Though November is known to most sportsmen as opening date for virtually all game species in Virginia, this month has also provided many anglers their greatest piscatorial thrills of the year.

Float trips for ducks are becoming increasingly popular on Virginia's piedmont and mountain rivers. If you are lucky enough to fill your 100 point limit by midday, a rod will be a welcome piece of equipment to while away the hours until the take-out point is reached. If the smallmouths are a bit sluggish in November, pickerel and crappie will be eager to bite a slowly worked spinner or pork rind-dressed jig hopped over the bottom.

Usually the timing works out perfectly. Fishing is best during midday hours at this time of year, when the sun climbs highest in the sky, warming the water and getting fish stirring in search of food. Hunting for most game birds and animals, on the other hand, is generally best during morning and evening hours. So you're not really cutting into your hunting time by fishing during the middle of the day, just occupying the unproductive hours in a sport in which midday is the most productive time - late fall and winter fishing.

Fishin' the Snake Castle (Continued from page 10)

caught and released on that trip will never be known, but the whole thing was an outdoorsman's dream.

Of course we didn't spend all of our time fishing. There was swimming and just messing around in the water as well as sightseeing trips in the canoes. The air motors gave us a two-way ticket. We could explore upstream or down at leisure, skimming over barely submerged rocks and gravel bars as though they weren't there. Also, we got in a lot of high-class loafing around camp during our stay.

This is no private fishing hole for a privileged few either. The Rappahannock is a public waterway, and the Germanna Bridge and Richardsville Geological Survey maps lay it out in detail. The Snake Castle starts about seven miles down from Kelly's Ford and has several islands that are made to order for overnight camping. However, few people seem to take advantage of them either to fish, camp, or just enjoy being on wilderness water, with its beaver signs along the banks and mama wood ducks pulling off their crippled acts to lead you away from their babies while maybe an osprey cruises lazily overhead interested only in fishing.

The privacy we enjoyed was unbelievable. The only time any of us saw a stranger was on a trip to Culpeper for ice and supplies. And so it was that after a week of glorious Huck Finn living at the Snake Castle, we broke camp and headed the Royal Coachman back to Charlottesville.

In Nature's Garden:

The Closed, Blind or Bottle Gential

By ELIZABETH MURRAY
Charlottesville

Illustrations by LUCILE WALTON

WHEN the bottle gentials start to appear around the edge of the University of Virginia's Biological Station at Mountain Lake, then it is time to close up the summer school and return to Charlottesville for the fall. The gentians start blooming in late August and continue through October; actually, if the weather is not too severe, they can be found even later than this. (Miss Walton made this illustration of a gentian she saw at Mountain Lake after there had been quite a severe frost). When they first come out, bottle gentians are blue, that brilliant blue which only gentians can really achieve. As the flower grows older, the corolla turns a deep purple. Thoreau described the color as "a splendid blue, light in the shade, turning to purple with age" and goes on to say ..."bluer than the bluest sky, they lurk in the moist and shady recesses of the banks." This is true, but they seem particularly to favor the edges of woodlands, as the trees give way to clearings.

There are two very similar species which are both called bottle gentians, *Gentiana andrewsii*, formerly *Dasystephana* and *Gentiana clausa*. The latter is supposed to be slightly smaller, but the two plants are really very hard to tell apart. They are both perennials with stiff, stout stems 1-2 feet high. As with most members of the gentian family, the leaves are opposite; they are pointed at the tip and narrowed or rounded at the base, sessile, that is without a stalk, and slightly roughened at the edges. The flowers are 1-1½ inches long, also without separate flower stalks. They are arranged in terminal clusters and there may also be a few flowers in the axils of the upper leaves. The corolla is occasionally white but usually the proper gentian blue. It is tubular, as in all gentians, and has rather indistinct lobes which remain nearly or completely closed at the summit, hence or course, the various common names. The bees, however, are not put off by this apparent lack of access. They alight on the flower, pull the lobes apart, and force an entrance, gaining nectar for themselves and ensuring pollination for the flower. There are two short stigmas and five stamens, their anthers united into a tube which is inserted on the corolla.

The gentian family has a world wide distribution with 70 genera and about 800 species. The name *gentian* comes from *Gentius* who was king of Illyria, part of Greece, in the second century B.C. He had a somewhat checkered military career, being continually in trouble with the Romans and finally ending up as their prisoner at Spoletium after a defeat in battle. However, he must also have had his scientific side, because, according to Pliny, it was he who first discovered the bitter principle in the gentian root and used it medicinally. Gentian root comes from *Gentiana lutea*, the yellow gentian, otherwise known as bitter root or felwort. It is a European species and is still used today for its bitter properties. All members of the family have some bitter juice in their stems. Gentian violet, the old-fashioned remedy for thrush, pin-worms and fever blisters is an aniline dye derivative, and has no direct relationship, other than color, with any member of the gentian family. The specific name *clausa* merely means 'closed.' *Gentiana andrewsii* was called after Henry C. Andrews, an Engligh botanical artist and engraver who worked at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

Most gentians bloom in the late summer and fall. It is comforting to have something so attractive appearing so late in the year. Bottle gentians have a wide distribution in the eastern United States and across the midwest. As well as woodlands, they are found in meadows, prairies and thickets, as long as the location is sufficiently moist. They can be transplanted relatively easily and will also last well as cut flowers. However, I am always a little hesitant to mention both of those attributes, lest it encourage widespread digging up of a plant which is really best growing in its own natural habitat - so enjoy it there if you can.

Edited by JIM KERRICK

Always remain seated in an open boat.

Hunting and Water Safety

Each year thousands of hunters take to the water. Since hunting with a boat takes one to fairly remote places with little chance of assistance in the event of an emergency, hunters should be extra cautious. There is always the chance of falling out of a boat into deep water or walking into water over your head.

When using a boat propelled by machinery, always carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for each person on board. In fact, boaters must comply with all safety requirements such as those regarding lights, sounding devices, fire extinguishers, etc. which vary depending on the size of your boat. In addition, be sure you have a valid registration and that the number is properly displayed on the boat's bow.

Always remain seated in an open boat. If caught in rough water or weather, keep a low center of gravity by lying down. If an accident occurs, stay within the boat if at all possible. Don't try to swim to shore. Exposure to low temperature water causes hypothermia or subnormal body temperatures.

If you are separated from your boat or floating device, drop your gun and ammunition. Air trapped in your hunting clothing will bring you to the surface. Try and relax. This helps you to conserve energy.

If you are wearing hip boots, keep the tops under water as air trapped in the boots will cause them to float at the knees. Turn on your back, face up, and use a backstroke to paddle to shore or a fixed object such as a day marker. Knee boots will float also, if you turn on your stomach and allow your legs to bend forward.

If duck hunting, grab any floating decoy within your reach and push them inside your coat or jacket to help stay afloat. If necessary, free the anchor lines.

Oars can also help you. If you have only one, put it under your chin and spread your arms along its length. If you have two, roll on to your back and put an oar under your knees and the other one under the back of your neck. Again, stretch your arms along its length.

Upon reaching shore, immediately build a fire if possible. Stay by the fire until someone comes for you or you are thoroughly dry and know you can get to shelter unassisted.

"Drownproofing" is a floating method used in rough water. Begin with a deep breath, lay your head forward and relax your entire body, letting your arms dangle at your sides. As your body hangs vertically in the water, rest.

Before you need a breath, get ready for the change by leisurely crossing your arms, keeping forearms together, in front of your head and one knee toward your chest. Then extend the other foot behind you. As you raise your head smoothly but swiftly, stop with your chin still in the water. Then further raise your head, exhale through your nose, beginning as your nose emerges from the water. When you are through exhaling, gently sweep your palms outward and step downward on the water with both feet.

After you have inhaled, close your mouth and drop your head again, remembering to relax as before. When you feel you are ready for another breath, repeat the procedure.

Hypothermia Chart

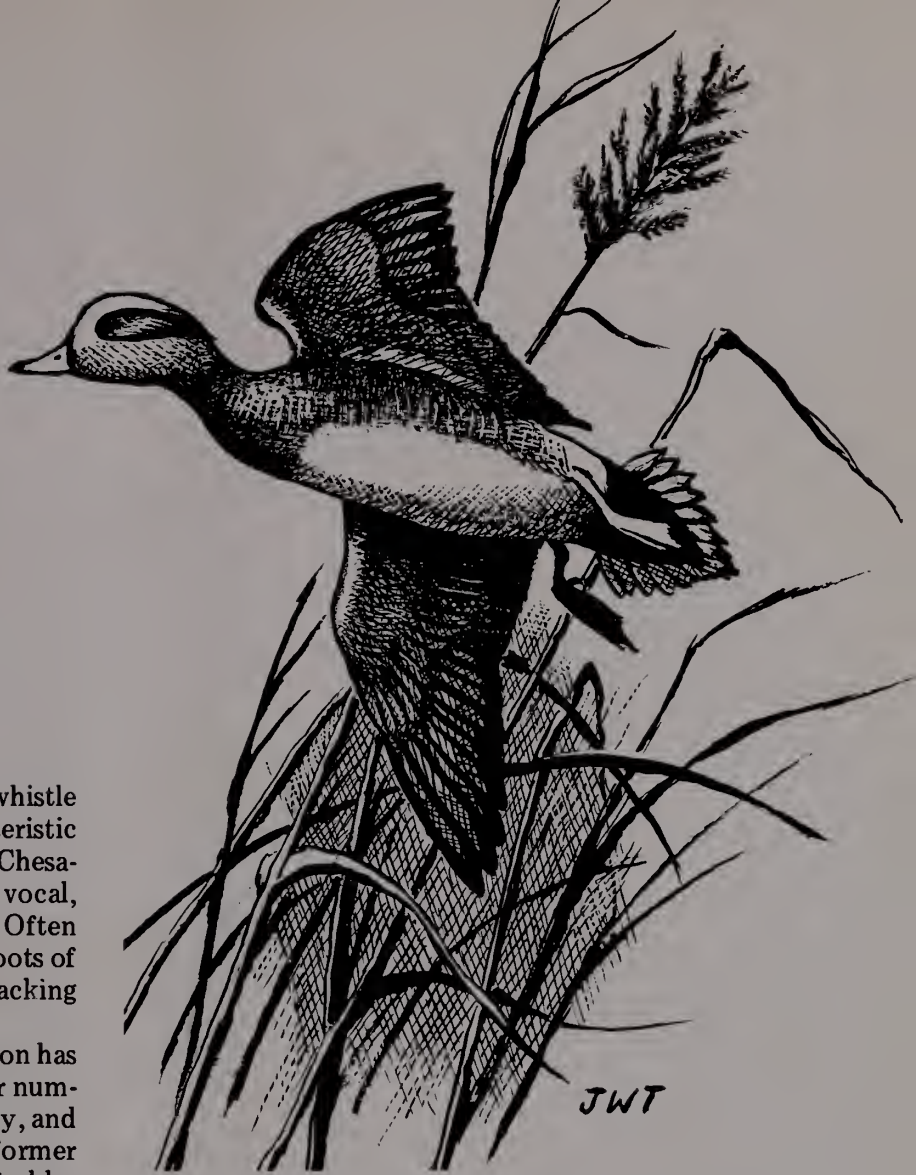
Water Temp.(F)	Unconciousness	Time of survival
32.5	under 15 minutes	under 45 minutes
32.5-40.0	15-30 min	30-90 min
40.0-50.0	30-60 min	1-3 hrs
50.0-60.0	1-2 hrs	1-6 hrs
60.0-70.0	2-7 hrs	2-40 hrs
70.0-80.0	3-12 hrs	3-indef.
Over 80	Indefinite	Indefinite

You undergo exposure to hypothermia when your body begins to lose heat faster than it produces it. Exercise can drain your energy resources. It is most important to terminate exposure. Symptoms include uncontrolled shivering; vague, slow speech; immobile hands; drowsiness; and apparent exhaustion. Hypothermia symptoms are greatly intensified by wind.

Bird of the Month

The American Wigeon

By JOHN W. TAYLOR
Edgewater, Maryland



UNTIL a few years ago, the soft, melodious whistle of the American Wigeon was a characteristic sound of the coves and creeks along the Chesapeake. On moonlit nights, especially, they were vocal, calling as they fed over the beds of pondweed. Often their notes were blended with the trumpet-like hoots of the whistling swan, and the loud, descending quacking of contented mallards.

But in the past few years the voice of the wigeon has been nearly stilled, at least in the Bay area. Their numbers are way down, for reasons not known exactly, and they have disappeared from many of their former haunts. Possibly the food supply has been affected by pollution, and they have moved to greener pastures; or it could be that they have suffered reverses on their prairie breeding grounds.

It is doubtful that hunting pressure has been the prime cause of this decrease, though they are favored and tasty game, and decoy readily. Like other waterfowl, they have learned that it is safer to feed at night, and spend the daylight hours resting some distance from shore. On the water, they are anxious, wary birds, quick to take flight at approaching danger.

The more traditional common name for this species, "baldpate," is still preferred by many. The white forehead and crown of the adult male *does* suggest baldness, though the head is fully feathered (as is that of the bald eagle). There is a patch of glossy green extending through the eye, a hue matched by the feathers of the speculum. The chest and sides are pale lavender-pink, and the back and sides are a finely vermiculated pinkish-brown. The long, arrow-shaped tail is distinctive, too, even in silhouette; but the best mark to look for, if the bird is flying, is the white patch on the forepart of the wing. Among our waterfowl, none other is so patterned.

Hen and immature wigeon are the most misidentified of ducks, even when in the hunter's bag, where they can be closely examined. "Grey ducks" they are called usually, a monicker applied as well to hen gadwall and pintail. The white forewing patch is consistent in every plumage, however the bird may be lacking in other characters. (The gadwall also has white in the wing, but it is situated in the speculum or trailing edge of the wing.)

In early March, just before embarking on the northward flight to the breeding grounds, parties of wigeon begin chasing each other in short rapid flight, calling constantly. Such mock combat is a prelude to mating, even if pairs may not form until they are on their summer range.

The first birds return to these latitutdes in mid-October, but the majority do not arrive until November.

The European wigeon, similar in shape and habit, but with a rich chocolate head replacing the gray one of the American bird, occasionally wanders to these shores. Several, probably of Icelandic origin, are discovered locally each winter.

Sea Duck

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

The white-winged scoter is a heavy-bodied, short-necked duck that flies single file close to the water. It is a dark duck with a white speculum.

[illegible] SCOTER

[illegible]hite he[illegible] patch[illegible] slo[illegible] bil[illegible] gives [illegible]ts head an [illegible]ted [illegible] scoters appear light[illegible] other scoters. Larg[illegible] produce a loud hum[illegible] ries surprising distan[illegible]

BLACK SCOTER

A medium-sized duck, it is totally black with a silvery sheen to its flight feathers. Flocks form great irregular masses to strung out "U's" or "V's". Its wings whistle in flight.

COMMON EIDER

A l[illegible] duck, the common eider weig[illegible] about 4½ pounds. It flies in long line[illegible] close to the water in what appears to l[illegible] labored flight. It is a shy duck and is easi[illegible] alarmed.

OLDSQUAW

The Oldsquaw is a small duck with a lo[illegible] tail. It flies with much swerving and tu[illegible]ning, usually low over the water in sma[illegible] irregular formations. It is a very noi[illegible] duck - full of life and chatter.